DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 161 865 95 SP 013 285

TITLE	A First Year Look at the National Diffusion/Adoption Network. Program Highlights.
INSTITUTION	Magi Educational Services, Inc., Port Chester, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	[75]
NOTE	9p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Demonstration Projects; Diffusion; Educational Innovation; Federal Programs; *Information Dissemination; *Information Networks; *Program Descriptions; *Project Applications; School Districts
IDENTIFIERS	*National Diffusion Network

ABSTRACT

This report describes the National Diffusion/Adoption Network, who is involved with it (developer/demonstrators, state facilitators, state education agencies, the U.S. Office of Education, and local school districts), and what happened during the first year cf its operaton. (DS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED161865

SP

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SP013 295

A FIRST YEAR FORMATIVE LOOK

Magi Educational Services, Inc.

A FIRST YEAR LOOK AT THE NATIONAL DIFFUSION/ADOPTION NETWORK

Program Highlights

Sponsored by:

U. S. Office of Education
under Section 306
Title III of ESEA

Prepared by:

Magi Educational Services, Inc.
353 Westchester Avenue
Port Chester, New York 10573

A FIRST YEAR LOOK AT THE NATIONAL DIFFUSION/ADOPTION NETWORK

Highlights

WHAT IS IT?

The National Diffusion/Adoption Network was established by the U.S. Office of Education in 1974 as a mechanism through which the nation's school systems would become aware of successfully demonstrated new educational ideas, products, and programs. These exemplary projects had been developed over nearly a decade by selected local school districts across the country with Federal funds supporting the research and development under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). But research has demonstrated that mere awareness of an exemplary practice is not enough for widespread adoption. Therefore, a basic function of the Diffusion/Adoption Network was to assist interested school districts in acquiring the competencies, through training, necessary to adopt or adapt a proven educational program. On the average, a demonstration project took three years to develop and usually impacted upon a single school district. The expectation was that through the National Diffusion/Adoption Network the cost/benefit ratio achieved with the original innovation would be considerably improved as the cost for research and development was spread over a growing number of user school districts.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Developer/Demonstrators (D/Ds) *

The projects constituting the pool of educational approaches to be diffused in the Network are those that have met the rigorous criteria of exemplariness established by USOE. During the first year of the Network, 1974-75, there were 33 D/Ds which represented programs in such areas as Basic Skills (Reading and Math); Learning Disabilities; the Handicapped; Environmental Education; Political and Legal Education; etc.

State Facilitators (SFs) *

The development of the role of State Facilitator is an innovation in the Network. Charged with the responsibility of linking school districts with appropriate D/Ds, SFs were to be the brokers for education change. Fifty-four SFs were funded to cover thirty states during the Network's first year. Three states had multiple SFs and two states shared one SF.

State Education Agencies (SEAs)

The Network function of SEAs is to aid in the identification of exemplary programs which will make up the pool of D/Ds and to assist the SFs in their respective states. The SEA may also function as an SF in those twenty states which have no Facilitator.

U.S. Office of Education (USOE)

Its on-going concern is to identify, develop and select criteria and approve programs for the D/D pool. USOE also provided the impetus, funding and technical assistance for establishing the Network, and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

Local School Districts (LEAs)

Public and non-public schools represent the terminals of the delivery system, the consumers whose needs are to be met through the adoption or adaption of D/D projects. The entire system was designed to relieve some of the financial burden on the LEA who wishes to utilize the most successful and innovative practices in modern education.

---

*The number of funded D/Ds and SFs were increased during the second year of Network operation, beginning July 1, 1975. An additional 100 innovative practices were declared exemplary by USOE, but no direct funds were provided to these projects for active diffusion/adoption efforts.

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE FIRST YEAR?

1. Of the total number of school districts, 87% (21,952) were contacted by mailing during the first three quarters of FY 1974-75 and informed of the 33 innovative programs that constituted the Network pool during the first year of the project.
2. Of those initially contacted, 30% (6,650) LEAs responded, indicating they were interested in one or more of the exemplary educational practices available through the Network.
3. Representatives from approximately 1800 school districts participated in training activities through the Network during the first year effort which represented 27% of those who responded to initial awareness mailing.
4. Approximately 19,000 persons were trained during the first year. Three out of every four persons were teachers; the other one was either an administrator, a parent, or a community representative.
5. The average estimated first year cost of the Network was $4100 to train each school district, and $386 to train each person. These figures do not represent the cost of training sessions alone, but include the cost of all activities involved in meeting the Network goal (i.e., dissemination, demonstration, preparation for training, travel, administrative costs, follow-up, evaluation, etc.).

6. Thirty-five states had Network representatives (D/Ds, SFs or both). The average distance between state agents who facilitated training (SFs), and those conducting training (D/Ds) was 1012 miles. Thus, the Network was both conceptually and operationally a national network.

7. There were substantial differences in the number of training sessions between those states having State Facilitators and those states which did not. As of March 31, 1975, 28 of the 30 states with SFs facilitated 559 training sessions for 31 D/Ds. Of the 20 states without SFs, five (5) states facilitated eight (8) training sessions for six (6) D/Ds.

8. The Level of funding appeared to be highly related to level of success, especially for State Facilitators.

9. Those Developer/Demonstrators whose projects deal with revision, expansion, or enrichment of existing curricula seem to have the highest rate of transferability, while those involved with school or adminstrative reorganization have the lowest rate of transferability. This is consonant with research which has found that the greater the complexity of the innovation, and the less compatible it is with existing structures and practices, the more difficult it is to adopt.

10. The most active and successful local school districts have a high level of administrative support for innovation, the presence of a catalyst on staff, a general atmosphere of receptivity toward change and openness and flexibility of staff.

A comprehensive report of the first year formative evaluation procedures and findings has been prepared by an independent evaluation firm. Interested parties should contact:

MAGI EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, INC.
353 Westchester Avenue
Port Chester, New York 10573